



## Winter 2004 Housing Roundtables

**January 22, 2004, Oakland, California**  
**January 27, 2004, Los Angeles, California**

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### BACKGROUND

During "Fair Housing Month" in April of 2002, the first Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) sponsored housing roundtables were held in Oakland and Los Angeles, California. The purpose of these meetings was to raise awareness of current issues and to develop strategies for preventing housing discrimination in California. These meetings gave the Department an opportunity to create a forum where housing advocates, providers, and other interested parties could meet and discuss ways to enhance communications and working relationships. DFEH could also, at this time, provide updates on fair housing laws, enforcement efforts, and outreach activities. Due to the success of these meetings, it was determined to schedule the roundtables on a regular basis. The winter 2004 meetings are the latest in this series.

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### AGENDA

- I. Opening Remarks**
  - II. Recap of the DFEH/HUD Partnership Initiative and Status of the Mediation Program**
  - III. Department Report**
  - IV. HUD Report/Comments**
  - V. Open Discussion**
  - VI. Closing Comments**
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DFEH Interim Director Jill Peterson began proceedings at the Oakland meeting with opening remarks that welcomed new and returning Roundtable members. This was followed by the introduction of representatives from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in San Francisco. HUD representatives included Anne Quesada, Enforcement Center Director; and Jeff Jackson, Program Operations Chief, HUD-FHEO; Jacqueline Booth, Civil Rights Analyst; and Rosalind Yeater, Equal Opportunity Specialist. Wanda Kirby, DFEH Deputy Director of the Enforcement Division, opened the Los Angeles meeting. After David Quezada, Director of the Los Angeles Program Center, was recognized DFEH staff members in attendance were then acknowledged.

DFEH staff presenters at the Oakland meeting included Andrea Rosa, DFEH Deputy Director, Legislation and Policy/Mediation Programs, Susan Saylor, Staff Counsel, and Housing District Administrators Jaime Reyes and Susan Sheftel. The Los Angeles meeting consisted of DFEH Staff presenters Beth Rosen-Prinz, Housing Regional Administrator; Nora Baltierrez, Southern California Mediation Program Administrator (LA); and Satoshi Yanai, Staff Counsel.

Statewide Roundtable participants were comprised of both housing advocates (advocacy groups, fair housing councils), and housing providers (rental associations, property owners and managers). Others in attendance included private attorneys and other interested persons.

First on the meeting's agenda was a recap of the DFEH/HUD Partnership Initiative and then a status report on the Department's first Housing Mediation Program. A brief history of the Partnership Initiative explained how the two-part HUD grant was designed to augment DFEH's housing enforcement efforts in order to reduce the number of cases that remain open over 100 days after filing.

The first part of the grant added additional investigative consultants and a new unit to the Oakland Housing office. DFEH housing has been able to expedite the complaint process and significantly reduce the number of aged cases in the system. Part two of the Initiative provided the resources to establish the Housing Mediation Program. This gives housing enforcement the ability to resolve complaints without a lengthy investigation through mediation. A PowerPoint presentation on the mediation program, with accompanying handouts, was then followed by a Q and A session.

After the Initiative Recap, presenters then offered the Department Report. Topics included were the Department's current enforcement efforts and the 2003 Legislative Summary ([www.dfeh.ca.gov](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov)). DFEH's legal unit also provided an update on Commission decisions and court cases (handout). Wrapping up the report was an outline on outreach and educational endeavors.

HUD representatives then held an open discussion for participants who took advantage of the time to share many ideas and housing concerns.

During the last session, an open forum provided Roundtable members with the opportunity to discuss additional issues. An informed audience presented the floor with a variety of challenging questions. Several members expressed their continued support of the Housing Mediation Program and appreciation for the housing Roundtables.

In closing comments, Interim Director Peterson and Deputy Director Kirby solicited input and suggestions from the participants as to how DFEH can help them with future housing issues, and asked for ways to improve the Roundtables. Everyone was thanked for attending and encouraged to contact DFEH with any further questions.

### **Internet Resources**

DFEH Housing Mediation Program  
Department of Fair Employment and Housing  
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

[www.dfehmp.ca.gov](http://www.dfehmp.ca.gov)  
[www.dfeh.ca.gov](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov)  
[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

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